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**Master's Thesis of Political Science**

**Debating the Politics of Recognition:  
Rethinking Charles Taylor's Horizon of Recognition**

**인정의 정치:**

**테일러의 인정의 지평을 중심으로**

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Debating the Politics of Recognition:

# **Rethinking Charles Taylor's Horizon of Recognition**

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## Abstract

This thesis aims to examine Nancy Fraser's criticism against Charles Taylor model of recognition, and reconstructs Taylor's response to Fraser's criticism based on his other works, *Sources of the Self* (1989) and *A Secular Age* (2008). This analysis is relevant to contemporary Korean society due to already existing as well as rising claims for recognition. Taylor's main claim is that recognition is "a vital human need" for identity formation. He assumes the dialogical nature of identity, and stresses the existence of horizon in the background of individual identities. On the other hand, Fraser argues that approaching recognition in terms of identity is misleading, and the objective for addressing the problem of recognition must be to achieve equal status of individuals. Fraser criticizes the Taylorian model of recognition for displacing the "politics of redistribution" and risking the danger of reification.

Chapter II examines how Taylor and Fraser theorize the concept of recognition differently. Taylor constructs a historical narrative to explain the rise of the modern notions of equality and difference, and demonstrates how the two values should be pursued. On the other hand, Fraser theorizes recognition from contemporary politics, or "folk-paradigm," and stresses that redistribution and recognition must be analytically distinguished. The

difference between Taylor and Fraser regarding the relations between recognition and redistribution rises from the way in which the two thinkers theorize. For Taylor, the modern notion of economy is a historical social imaginary. Furthermore, the second chapter reviews Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2008) in order to further examine the various ways in which Fraser and Taylor each construct their theory. By reviewing *A Secular Age*, this chapter draws out two implications. Firstly, Taylor's account on disengaged moral valuation may be interpreted as a response to Fraser's criticism, for Taylor questions the fundamental moral valuation beneath Fraser's argument. Secondly, even Taylor's method of analyzing history cannot be applied one-dimensionally to non-western societies.

Chapter III compares Taylor's "presumption" and Fraser's corresponding notion, "status." Taylor emphasizes the difficulty of recognizing other cultures due to the difference of horizons. He argues that we should "presume" the good of the other culture prior to studying that culture, since there is no neutral ground to understand other cultures. Fraser, however, argues that guaranteeing equal "status" to an individual is sufficient, and that recognizing the other in terms of identity risks the danger of "reification." This chapter reviews *Sources of the Self* (1989) in order to see why "presumption" is crucial in Taylor's perspective. The third chapter concludes that Taylor understands identity as a narrative, and this assumes a

certain degree of incommensurability. This means that the confrontation of difference in modern society may not be adequately addressed by the framework of “status,” since there are conflicts of difference which is not limited to “status.”

This thesis concludes that Taylor’s main argument remains largely unrefuted by Fraser’s criticism. Taylor’s opposition against the attempt to address difference on neutral grounds is supported by his strong argument on horizon. He states that social ontologies working as a background for individual identities do not actually exist. Going further, he warns against the modern tendency to belittle the difference rising from separate horizons as well as its tendency to take the disengaged ideal for granted while it is itself a created social imaginary. Therefore, even if Fraser’s concerns on economic inequalities as well as the problem of reification may be timely, Taylor’s argument on the politics of recognition remains largely intact, unless his understanding of identity and narrative on modern identity/social imaginary is refuted.

**Key words:** Charles Taylor, politics of recognition, horizon, identity, Nancy Fraser, difference, Alex Honneth

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## Chapter I. Introduction

Difference takes on a whole new meaning in contemporary society as compared to its usage in the past. This is not only because people within modern societies are increasingly becoming diverse, but also, and more importantly, because equality is the overarching value of modern democratic societies. As a result, equitably addressing both equality and difference became a new challenge in the modern era, since the two values oppose each other at times. Accordingly, there have been active scholarly discussions in the western academia on recognition as an adequate framework for equality and difference.

As a comparatively monocultural society, recognition of alien cultures has rarely been a pressing political issue in South Korea. This is because no minority cultural groups large enough to make substantial political voices have existed up until the present time. However, multicultural challenges are not nonexistent. Around 1.5 million foreign workers from economically less developed countries are employed as manual workers. Approximately 350 thousand families are “multicultural families,” and more than half of the families consist of women who emigrated from the economically less developed countries. These foreigners and their children are often discriminated within Korean society. *Elephant*

(2004), a novel on these families, discloses the sense of isolation and anger of the first and the second generations of these foreigners. The writer persuasively presents how racial prejudice in the form of white supremacy is internalized within Koreans, and depicts the double standards Koreans have toward Caucasian and non-Caucasian residents.

As the western academic debates on recognition signify, recognition is not necessarily applicable exclusively to multicultural experiences. Rather, depending on the range of its definition, recognition may also cover a broad range of social struggles, including gender, class, and inter-generational conflicts. Other demands for recognition within Korean society which are more explicitly voiced out are those of the older generations and women. While their claim for recognition is not grounded on racial and cultural diversity, it is nonetheless based on the notion of difference. The most notable movement from older generations is the recent Taegeuki (Korean national flag) rally concerning the impeachment of Former President Park. The demonstration contained a politically extreme rightist claim, and even demanded the declaration of martial law as it was executed in the past military regime. Lee Jin-Suk (2016) conducted an insightful study on the movements of these older generations, and defines their voice as a claim for recognition. She purports that their identity belongs to the past era of military and development-centered regimes, and that they feel as if their

sense of value or importance is threatened by the democratic movements of the younger generations.

Another significant movement for recognition is the one for gender equality. Indeed, it is currently one of the most heatedly debated topic in Korean society. Their complaints arise due to the unjust patriarchic social arrangements of Korean society. What is interesting from their arguments is the aggressive nature of some of their claims. Some, of the activists use derogatory words such as “Korean male worm” toward men, along with the bellicose attack against the opposite gender. Men are condemned for the very fact that they fall under the sexual category of males, regardless of whether he has committed a discriminative act or not. The charges also seem to be inconsistent, for they do not take a separationist position while utilizing a separationist rhetoric. Their statements at times appear to be violent and their utterances can be contradictory if not at the very least illogical for men in the society.

The question which arises from these claims is how should we, as a society, understand and respond to their demands for recognition. Specifically, I am interested in comparing the positions of Taylor and Fraser regarding recognition. The following are questions brought to my/our attention in comparing the arguments of the two scholars: What does it

mean to recognize difference? Why should we recognize the difference? How should we comprehend the utterance of their claims which are not understandable within the framework of our background or understanding? What is the relation between recognition and modern democratic ideals?

There are, indeed, academic studies on these social phenomena in Korea. For instance, Hee Young Lee (2010) studied the struggle for recognition of North Korean defectors, Young Ok Kim (2010) on ‘marriage migrant women,’ and You Piao (2011) on Korean-Chinese residing in South Korea. Other than the study of multicultural struggles, Hyun-Jae Lee (2009), for example, conducted a similar research on recognition of sex-workers in South Korea. Although most of the above-mentioned researches borrow Axel Honneth’s concept of struggle for recognition as a framework, their works are case studies rather than theoretical discussions. Possessing a substantial theoretical resource on contemporary social struggles is worthy in and of itself, especially when the intensity of the challenge is expected to become stronger in the future.

While academic interests on recognition are still at an incipient stage in Korea, a fervent debate on recognition has been ongoing in the western academia at least from the 1990s. Amongst various studies on recognition, Charles Taylor’s essay, “The Politics of Recognition” (1994),

stands out as the most influential one. This is because his “The Politics of Recognition” is a “catalytic essay” (Markell, 2003, p. 3) or “a signal essay” (McNay, 2008, p. 2) that initiated the full-fledged contemporary discussion on recognition.

Taylor’s contention is that recognition is a vital human need for identity formation, and misrecognition can seriously harm a person’s identity formation. In the essay, Taylor explores how notions of equality and difference were developed throughout history, and argues that the two values can be pursued at the same time even though to do so is not without challenge. Based on his historical narrative, Taylor introduces fundamental liberties, privileges and immunities, presumption, and the fusion of horizon as notions to understand the relations between equality and difference in the modern context.

Taylor’s essay has been followed by numerous criticisms. Many of the critiques cogently reveal shortcomings of Taylor’s discussion on recognition. Nonetheless, Taylor still provides insightful contributions to recognition in modern society. As a matter of fact, his theory of recognition includes some very crucial aspects which the theories of other scholars are devoid of. Thus the objective of my thesis will be to reconstruct Taylor’s enriching theory of recognition by referring to his other major writings,

*Sources of the Self* (1989) and *Secular Age* (2008). The rearrangement of his argument is meaningful because even though he is no longer directly engaging in the debate on recognition, his other works include his reflections on this topic. By doing so, we will be able to see Taylor's more coherent and complete argument on modernity, social ontology or horizon, and recognition.

One of the prominent critiques is by Nancy Fraser. In the mid-1990s, Fraser began to engage in the discourse of recognition. Her claim stands out from that of other scholars because she contends that the 'politics of difference' has obliterated the problem of redistribution (Fraser, 1997). She argues that the politics of recognition no longer supplements the politics of redistribution, but rather, that the former is displacing the latter. This thesis will examine the criticism of Fraser, as a representative critic, on Taylor with a reference to the debate between Fraser and Honneth. Among other possible discussions which can be studied, I claim that the study on Fraser's theory against Taylor in reference to Honneth is pivotal for two reasons. First, the debate between Fraser and Honneth is one of the most recent and influential scholarly discussions on recognition. Secondly, the study brings our attention to the relation between the theory and the practice of recognition. To go on further, I contest that the fact Fraser brings the problem of redistribution to recognition is a secondary issue. The matter of

more significance, rather, is that she raises the problem of philosophy and politics. My argument is that although there are valid oppositions that Fraser brings against Taylor, the latter's model of recognition is insufficiently refuted. Despite Fraser's concern for the displacement of the problems of distribution is valid in and of itself, Taylor's model of recognition nonetheless has a strength which is absent in Fraser's model.

Fraser's argument on recognition can be divided into two parts. The first part concerns what Fraser refers to as 'perspectival dualism.' Here she argues why recognition should be understood in a dualistic model of redistribution and recognition. This is the main issue which is debated by Fraser and Honneth in *Recognition or Redistribution*. The second part is what she refers to as the 'status model of recognition.' Fraser suggests a comprehensive theory which can encompass both problems of redistribution and recognition. The status theory presented by Fraser directly clashes with Taylor's argument on recognition rather than that of Honneth.

This thesis will be structured as follows. In the second chapter, I will discuss the relation between recognition and redistribution. Departing from Fraser's perspectival dualism, I will compare and contrast Honneth's and Taylor's positions on the topic. I will clarify Taylor's position regarding redistribution, the topic which he never directly discusses. In doing so, I will

compare how Taylor and Fraser each theorize recognition. Chapter three will examine Fraser's status model in the light of Taylor's argument. I will argue that Taylor's presumption, which corresponds to Fraser's status, contains some valuable philosophical insights as well as usefulness in practical politics absent in the notion of status.

Before delving further to examine the argument on recognition by the three scholars, I will first review the previous literatures on recognition. This will help situate the arguments of Taylor, Fraser and Honneth, as well as my thesis in the context of the discourse on recognition. Recognition has been an important philosophical concept at least since Hegel, and hence there is a long history of discussion on recognition. However, reviewing the academic debates surrounding Taylor's "The Politics of Recognition" is sufficient for the purpose of this thesis.

The discussion of Iris Young is pivotal in understanding Fraser's critique. This is because Young was one of the first scholars to indicate the inadequacy of the redistribution paradigm to address new social movements. In *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990), she argues that the paradigm of redistribution should not be extended to understand the new movements, such the claims for gender and race equality. Arguing within the tradition of critical theory, Young contends that "a conception of justice should begin



with the concepts of domination and oppression” (3). She argues that social group difference exists because some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, and that it is crucial to acknowledge this difference to undermine oppression. Young also stresses that democratic decision-making process must be guaranteed for social justice, and to do so, affirmative action programs are at times necessary. The concern that Fraser expresses is contrary to what Young indicates – that is, the politics of recognition obliterated the politics of redistribution.

The arguments of several scholars are similar to that of Fraser’s in that they show concern for Taylorian ‘politics of recognition.’ Patchen Markell (2003), for example, has argued that Taylorian ‘politics of recognition,’ has the tendency to divert “attention from the role of the powerful, of the misrecognizers. . . focusing on the consequences of suffering misrecognition rather than on the more fundamental question of what it means to commit it” (p. 18). Kelly Oliver (2004) also provides an insightful criticism of the Taylorian ‘politics of recognition,’ stating that the demand for recognition from the dominant culture or group is actually a symptom of the pathology of oppression (p. 79). Louis McNay (2008) also makes an important argument on recognition theory. She argues that the theory of recognition is “far from being an authentic indicator of oppression or injustice, recognition claims derive their legitimacy from a certain

sentimentalized discourse of suffering” (McNay, 2008, p. 10). According to her argument, the politics of recognition is “essentially middle-class phenomenon” (MacNay, 2008, p. 10).

Other scholars assess and compare the debate between Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth. Christopher Zurn (2003), for example, argues that Fraser is correct in claiming that a theory of recognition politics can be integrated with a distinct theory of redistributive politics. However, he states that Fraser is wrong to argue that a critical theory of social justice requires a status model of recognition. Zurn further contends that problems caused by politics of recognition, such as reification, can be solved at least within Honneth’s theory, which is subtler than that of Taylor’s. Maeve Cooke (2006) also assesses the argument of Fraser and Honneth in his book, *Re-presenting the Good Society*. He uses both Fraser and Honneth as a case presenting that context transcending validity is not incompatible with the claims of situated rationality (p.17). Simon Thompson (2006) evaluated the debate more comprehensively than previous scholars. He attempted to build a collective account on recognition and redistribution abstracted from the theories of each scholar. He argues that the theories can be combined if one carefully distinguishes the strengths and weaknesses of each theory (Thompson, 2006, p. 37). For example, one may incorporate a psychological account of identity formation as long as one avoids foundationalism and considers

material conditions. Marjan Ivkovic (2014) likewise gives an important criticism on Fraser and Honneth. He argues that Fraser misinterprets Honneth's normative perspective as being psychologically reductionist when Honneth's perspective is based on structural injustices (p. 41).

Another group of scholars evaluate the usefulness of the theories in practical politics. These studies tend to endorse Fraser rather than other philosophers. Paul Garrett (2009), for instance, compares the theories of the scholars and concludes that Fraser's theory provides the most persuasive account of the nature of oppression and subjugation present in the discourse of social work. Konstantin Petoukhov (2012) conducts a similar research on the recognition of the indigenous people in Canada. He concludes that Fraser's framework is more beneficial in understanding social injustice (Petoukhov, 2012, p. 1512). Another example is Julie Connolly (2016), who likewise argues that Honneth's theory requires a fundamental revision and that Fraser's theory is more pertinent for feminist political economy (p. 98).

As with the rising demand for recognition within society, there are also a number of studies in Korea related to the discourse of recognition. Besides the case studies I mentioned earlier, there are further theoretical studies on Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth. For instance, Woen-sick Kim (2009) compares Fraser and Honneth, concluding that Fraser lacks a normative

ground and that Honneth must be more sensitive to the external economic structure (p. 113). Moon-Soo Lee (2012) similarly concludes that Fraser lacks a normative base and that Honneth requires economic sensitivity (p. 44). Mi-Youn Baik (2009), on the other hand, endorses Fraser's perspectival realism for being more helpful in addressing injustice in the real world rather than the theories of Taylor and Honneth (p. 106).

## Chapter II. Theorizing Recognition

In this chapter, we will examine how Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth understand the relation of recognition and distribution. we will mainly compare Taylor and Fraser, and introduce Honneth in order to clarify the difference between the two. How each scholar relates the two is critically connected to how they theorize their models of recognition. The difficult question here is understanding Taylor's position on recognition and distribution. Comparing Taylor's position with Fraser's is ambiguous not merely because the former does not explicitly discuss redistribution, but also because he is discussing recognition on a different theoretical level from Fraser. In order to clarify Taylor's position and compare the difference between the two, we will review Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2008).

Taylor explains recognition by reconstructing the historical narrative on the development of equality and difference, while Fraser builds her theory from "folk-paradigm," or contemporary politics. We will see that Taylor does not strictly distinguish cultural and economic injustice because he has a different objective in discussing recognition, which is to historically understand how we ended up here. We will further discuss why Taylor's

historical studies on recognition is important with reference to *A Secular Age* (2008). By reviewing *A Secular Age* (2008), we will be able to see that Taylor's opposition to disengaged and neutralized moral valuation may be interpreted as a response to Fraser's model of recognition. In addition, his concern on the sense of meaninglessness of modern people – which in fact is only insinuated in "The Politics of Recognition" (1994) – will be brought to our awareness.

## **Dualism or Monism**

### **Taylor: Historical Narrative on Recognition**

As it is briefly mentioned in the introduction, the primary argument that Taylor (1994) makes is that recognition is a "vital human need" (p. 26). Our identity is partially formed by recognition, and the absence of recognition or misrecognition may cause real suffering, damage, and distortion to a person or a group of people. He argues that in order to understand the connection between recognition and identity, one must "take into account the dialogical character of human" (p. 32). Discovering one's identity does not work out in isolation, but it is formed through dialogue with others.

It is critical to note how Taylor use history in order to his make his argument on recognition. Historical analysis is his important method of philosophizing, which could be easily found in his other works as well. He argues that while identity formation through dependence on others has always been extant, recognition is a modern problem. Taylor provides a historical narrative to explain why recognition has become the central issue of the modern era. Two changes have created the modern preoccupation with identity and recognition. The first is the collapse of social hierarchies, the basis of which was honor. The modern notion of a universalist and egalitarian dignity – “inherent dignity of human beings or of citizen dignity” (Taylor, 1994, p. 27) – replaced this intrinsically unequal notion of honor.

The second change is the rise of the ideal of ‘authenticity’ or modern identity. Although its origin can be traced back to Augustine, Taylor (1994) states that the ideal of authenticity was incipient from the eighteenth-century notion that “human beings are endowed with a moral sense, and intuitive feeling for what is right and wrong” (p. 28). Rousseau, for example, stated that morality is about following the voice of nature within us, while Herder argued that “each of us has an original way of being human” (p. 30). In the modern society where authenticity is predominant rather than honor, recognition is not given for granted. In contrast to the past when recognition was built into social hierarchy, an inward, personal, and original identity of

individuals is not recognized a priori in the present times.

Taylor argues the two major changes mentioned above – the modern dignity and identity – led to the rise of the politics of universalism and the politics of difference, respectively. The politics of universalism emphasize the equal dignity of all citizens. Although there are differences in interpretation, it indicates identical rights and immunities for all citizens. The politics of difference, on the other hand, emphasizes a unique identity. This means different individuals and groups should be equally recognized for their distinctness from everyone else.

These two types of politics are potentially set in opposition to each other, and Taylor's question is how one must resolve the conflict. In Taylor's perspective, Anglo-American tradition takes precedence over the former to the latter. For example, Dworkin distinguishes procedural and substantive commitment and argues that liberal society is a society that does not adopt a particular substantive view concerning the ends of life. However, according to Taylor, there are implicit yet profound philosophical assumptions underlying this liberal view which could be traced back to Kant. This view aims to understand the human being as autonomous, capable of determining his or herself a view of good life.

This procedural liberal view has its limits in Taylor's perspective. It



cannot capture the aspiration for a cultural survivor since procedural liberalism “insists on uniform application of rules defined by rights, and it is suspicious of collective goals” (Taylor, 1994, p. 60). Taylor presents Quebec as an example, where an affirmative policy protects cultural distinctiveness, such as regulating children in English-speaking schools. As with the view of procedural liberalism, there can be no basis of justification for such a policy. Instead, Taylor suggests that one should distinguish fundamental liberties from privileges and immunities. The former concerns “those that should never be infringed and therefore ought to be unassailably entrenched” (p. 59), and the latter are those “that are important, but that can be revoked or restricted for reasons of public policy on the other” (p. 59). Although pursuing these two separate objectives will undoubtedly place them in conflict, Taylor argues that it is not altogether impossible. Simultaneous pursuit of the two is possible on a different model of liberalism, which is grounded upon judgments concerning what is a good life.

### **Fraser: Recognition from Folk Paradigm**

In contrast, the concern Nancy Fraser had which led her to engage in the debate on recognition was that the ‘politics of recognition,’ epitomized by Taylor’s “The Politics of Recognition,” displaced the politics of distribution. Fraser (1997) characterizes the conditions of the

contemporary world as: 1) the absence of a credible alternative vision to the existing (capitalist) order; 2) a changed grammar of political claims-making – from struggles for material redistribution within the welfare-state paradigm to the preoccupation with identity politics in the post-1989 world; and 3) resurgent economic liberalism (p. 1-4). In this new condition, distribution, which was once the central issue of discussions on social justice, is now replaced by the politics of recognition or politics of difference. Diagnosing the problem, Fraser suggests a theory that can comprehensively deal with both politics of recognition and distribution.

Fraser states that there are two meanings of recognition and redistribution, namely, philosophical and political meanings. Philosophically, the politics of recognition was developed in the continent, primarily by Hegel. On the other hand, the discussion on distribution has its roots in the Anglo-American liberal tradition. Setting this philosophical tradition aside, Fraser claims that her primary normative concept of recognition and redistribution stems from the actual politics, which she terms as the folk paradigm of recognition and redistribution.

Folk paradigm of redistribution and folk paradigm of recognition can be contrasted in four key respects. First, the two paradigms assume different conceptions of injustice. While the former focuses on the socio-

economic and economic structure of society, the latter emphasizes cultural domination, such as social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. Second, the two paradigms propose different remedies for injustice. Whereas the first paradigm proposes economic restructuring, the second paradigm proposes cultural or symbolic change. Third, the two have different understandings concerning the collective subjects suffering under injustice. While collective subjects of the former refer to class, the latter refers to status group. Fourth, the two folk paradigms assume contrasting understandings of group difference. The redistribution paradigm treats the difference as a result of unjust political economy. On the other hand, the recognition paradigm treats difference in either of the following two ways: in the first version, differences are benign pre-existing cultural variations, whereas in the second version, differences are not pre-existing but a result of unjust interpretive schema.

Through this distinctions, Fraser's divergent understanding of recognition, compared to that of Taylor, comes into the view. Where Taylor focuses internal understanding of individuals, Fraser centers her attention on the external aspect of recognition. While recognition is primarily a matter of human nature and need for Taylor, it is matter of justice, or social arrangements on individuals or group for Fraser. These contrary understandings on recognition is related to Fraser's remedy on the problem

of recognition, status, as we will see in the next chapter.

To go on, redistribution and recognition are analytically distinct for Fraser, and neither of them can be reduced to the other one. They are both fundamental and are with equal independence. She gives an example of an African American worker in Wall Street who could not catch a taxi, and of a white male industrial worker who becomes unemployed. These two examples demonstrate that redistribution and recognition cannot be reduced to either one. For the sake of her argument, Fraser provides a conceptual spectrum, where in the one extreme, the source of every social problem is redistribution, and the other is recognition. As the example above reveals, almost every social injustice, whether concerning gender, culture or religion, has both problems of economic alienation and cultural discrimination. This is to be placed in the middle of the conceptual spectrum, and she calls this position “two dimensional” (Fraser, 1997, p. 25) and “virtually all real-world axes of subordination can be treated as two dimensional” (p. 25).

Fraser argues that there are two possible ways to construct dualism dealing with both recognition and redistribution. She claims that her view is perspectival dualism rather than substantive dualism. Substantive dualism “treats redistribution and recognition as two different sphere of justice, pertaining to two different societal domains” (Fraser, 1997, p. 61). Fraser

rejects substantive dualism on the grounds that it is a symptom rather than the solution of a current problem. On the other hand, in perspectival dualism, “redistribution and recognition do not correspond to two substantive societal domains, rather, they constitute two analytical perspectives that can be assumed with respect to any domain” (p. 63). This dualism is precisely what Fraser suggests.

### **Honneth: Recognition as Intersubjective Nature**

Although the purpose here is to compare the positions of Taylor and Fraser on recognition, it is helpful to introduce Axel Honneth’s position on the topic. Examining his theory of recognition will be conducive to clarifying the difference between Taylor and Fraser. Honneth’s philosophical position is closer to that of Taylor in the sense that he is deeply influenced by Hegel, while at the same time sharing commonality with Fraser in that both scholars are critical theorists. The two theorists are crucial figures of critical theory following Habermas and Rorty (Ivkovic, 2014, p. 31). The debate between Fraser and Honneth (2003) can be considered as a search for the appropriate social critique of contemporary politics.

In contending with Fraser, Honneth states that his “normative monism” is a more pertinent theory to confront modern economic and

cultural struggles than her “perspectival dualism.” In *Redistribution or Recognition?* (Fraser & Honneth, 2003), Honneth explains why Fraser’s theory construction is problematic, and goes on further to explicate why his theory makes more sense than that of Fraser.

According to Honneth, Fraser builds her theory based on the ‘new social movement.’ By ‘new social movement,’ he is referring to the movement which started initially from ecological demand, yet dominantly consists of ‘politics of identity,’ which turns away from material interest to the quality of human life with a focus on the phenomenon of multiculturalism (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 115). However, initiating her argument from the ‘new social movement’ is problematic since it is only a partial phenomenon of the struggles occurring in the contemporary world. He claims that “it is all too easy to abstract from social suffering and injustice that, owing to the filtering effects of the bourgeois public sphere, has not yet reached the level of political thematization and organization” (p. 116). Instead, Honneth argues that building social theory should begin from the suffering and misery that “exist prior to and independently of political articulation by social movements” (p. 117).

Honneth contests that the mistake made by Fraser is partially due to Taylor’s depiction of the history of the struggles. In the “Politics of

Recognition,” Taylor assumes a highly misleading history of liberal-capitalist societies (Honneth, 2003, p. 122). Taylor misrepresents the history by arguing that the struggles for legal equality in the past is now replaced with the struggles for cultural recognition of difference by social groups. Honneth argues instead that the claim for recognition has been continuously rooted in modern society, and that it is erroneous to argue that there were historical transitions of any sort.

Honneth then provides an argument on how to understand recognition and its relation to redistribution in modern society. He claims that even the ‘new social movement’ can be explained within the framework being suggested, the normative monism. Honneth argues that individual claims to intersubjective recognition is built into the social life. It is crucial to recognize that Honneth’s claim for recognition is not anthropological. Compared to Taylor’s recognition as a ‘vital human need,’ Honneth’s depiction of recognition is differentiated in that it is a peculiar ‘intersubjective nature of human beings.’ Furthermore, it is not directly rooted in institutions.

Fraser’s criticism on Taylorian recognition can be distinguished into two parts. The first is the relation between economic and cultural injustice,

and the second is the method of theorizing or philosophizing recognition. Although the method does not mechanically state the position on the relation of distribution and recognition, the latter is related to the former at least in the case of Taylor and Fraser. Fraser's question begins from her observation of the present state where in which the politics of recognition is replacing the politics of distribution. Accordingly, Fraser criticizes Taylor in both aspects – the economy-culture relation and the method.

Fraser's criticism against Taylor is critical because she raises concern for real political problems which arose after Taylorian politics of recognition became dominant. Hence, the following questions arise: Is Taylor's model of recognition inherently devoid of economic sensitivity? Or did the economic injustice which Fraser indicates emerge in the process of the politicization of Taylor's theory? In the second case, one may conclude that the unjust consequence was contingent rather than that it stemmed from the defect of Taylor's recognition model. In either case, Fraser raises a persuasive criticism against Taylor, given that her observation is correct.

Indeed, Taylor seems to pay less interest on economic injustice compared to Fraser's interest on the issue. However, he does address the problem of redistribution in "The Politics of Recognition." Taylor mentions that:



Just as a view of human beings as conditioned by their socioeconomic plight changed the understanding of second-class citizenship, so that this category came to include, for example, people in inherited poverty traps, so here the understanding of identity as formed in interchange and as possibly so malformed, introduces a new form of second-class status into our purview. As in the present case, the socioeconomic redefinition justified social programs that were highly controversial. For those who had not gone along with this changed definition of equal status, the various redistributive programs and special opportunities offered to certain populations seemed a form of undue favoritism. (1994, p. 39)

He argues that the principle of equal dignity has spread to the socioeconomic sphere, and as social programs changed due to socioeconomic redefinition, “the second change, the development of the modern notion of identity, has given rise to a politics of difference” (p. 38). This is the point where in which Honneth criticizes Taylor for providing a misleading representation of modern history. As I mentioned previously, Honneth states that Taylor inaccurately described that the struggles for economic inequality has changed into the struggle for cultural recognition for identity. Accordingly, Fraser takes this misrepresentation to account.

As we can see, Taylor does not remain silent on the problem of economic inequality. He compares the change in the identity politics with the “politics of redistribution” to a similar status, and presents the “politics of redistribution” as preceding chronologically. However, he does not strictly or analytically distinguish the two as Fraser does, nor does he attempt to combine them both within recognition as Honneth does. Taylor’s position remains vague because his project differs from that of Fraser and Honneth. While the primary interest of Fraser and Honneth is to search for an adequate theoretical framework to address the current injustice, Taylor’s main objective is to historically understand how we ended up here. Of course, this does not mean he is not dealing with contemporary struggles. Nonetheless, he is focused more on the historical development of the modern notion of equality.

It is worthwhile to briefly compare the positions of Fraser and Honneth here in order to understand the practical concern Fraser raises. According to Honneth, Fraser establishes her theory of perspectival dualism based on partial contemporary problems. Ivkovic (2014) gives a constructive commentary on this topic. He defines Fraser and Honneth as post-metaphysical thinkers under the critical theory tradition. By post-metaphysical thinking, he is referring to “the problem of grounding social critique in a theoretical basis free of essentialist speculation about human

nature, claims of insights into ‘trans-historical’ facts about social reality such as a historical teleology, or a ‘transcendentalist’ understanding of human reason” (Ivkovic, 2014, p. 31). Both positions are closer to Rorty than Habermas<sup>1</sup> in that they fully acknowledge the contingency of history and attempt to be free from any substantive philosophical speculations. However, both scholars do not completely abandon substantive philosophical speculations of any sort. In Ivkovic’s view, Fraser is more inconsistent because she tries to be less sectarian than Honneth.

Ivkovic is correct in describing the two philosophers as post-metaphysical thinkers. Even so, I do not think Fraser necessarily takes a defensive position. Honneth’s theory should be criticized on the same grounds by which he is criticizing Fraser, and the ultimate criteria for evaluating theory should be its explanatory power to address contemporary problems in the ‘post-metaphysical’ era. In fact, the numerous case studies comparing the appropriate framework to address injustice on recognition and redistribution prefer Fraser’s model to Honneth’s model, and this indirectly alludes to the fact that the former’s model may be more suitable than the latter.

In any case, we may conclude that Fraser’s criticism on Taylor is

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<sup>1</sup> See Habermans (1990) and Rorty (1989).

compelling since Taylor is indeed less sensitive when dealing with economic inequalities. However, it is also inaccurate to condemn Taylor for triggering a “new social movement” that displaces the “politics of redistribution,” because as aforementioned, his concern is more with history than the current phenomena. The questions that follow are why Taylor delves into history, and how his project is significant in understanding contemporary problems of recognition. To address these issues, it is helpful to review Taylor’s argument in *A Secular Age* (2008). Although his aim is to understand secularity (rather than recognition), or the dissipation of religion in our age, we can understand why history matters for Taylor in the bigger picture of his project. Furthermore, we are able to grasp how understanding recognition historically provides insight that we may not perceive otherwise.

## **Modernity and Recognition**

In *A Secular Age* (2008), Taylor argues that there are three possible ways to understand secularity. First, secularity can be interpreted in terms of the public sphere. The norms and principles that we follow within various spheres, such as economic, political, cultural, educational, and professional, do not refer to God or any other religious beliefs. Second, it could mean the diminishing of religious beliefs and practices, when people attend church

less often, for instance. The third meaning is that religious belief is no longer axiomatic and non-belief becomes the viable alternative. This third understanding of secularity is what Taylor mainly examines in his book.

Taylor asks how we moved from a hypothetical date from around year 1500, when atheism was virtually unimaginable, to 2000 when theism is almost unbelievable. He uses the term exclusive humanism, meaning social imaginary or a worldview that could find meaning without referring to God or transcendence. Here, social imaginary is defined as “the way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings, and this is not often expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, et cetera” (p. 171).

Taylor provides five elements of the modern social imaginary. First is the disenchantment and the “buffered” modern self. The spiritual world was dissolved and nature no longer perceived as to have a personality. The location of meaning has shifted from the world into the mind. The “buffered” self is a comparison to the “porous” self, the social imaginary of the past era where the self is open to influence of the enchanted exterior world. Second, living socially has a different meaning compared to the past. People are no longer perceived as a seamless body in an enchanted world, and therefore disbelief does result in communal repercussions. Third, it is the “lowering of

the bar” for flourishing. In the premodern social imaginary, transcendent and eternal telos heavily demanded the society and its members to achieve it. This resulted in a certain division of labor, clergy, warrior, and peasants, as well as the anti-structural ritual, carnival, in order to manage the tension between pursuit for transcendence and maintaining ordinary life. What changed in modernity is surrendering the high standard, or discarding the expectation for eternity. The fourth and the fifth elements are the alteration of the understanding on time and cosmos, respectively.

The umbrella term, “Reform” (with a capital R), is what Taylor uses to describe the variety of movements in late medieval and early modern time to deal with the tension between the demand for eternal life and domestic life, or the “two-tiered religion” (p. 63). Reform initiated from “a profound dissatisfaction with the hierarchical equilibrium between lay life and the renunciative vocation (p. 61). Although Taylor emphasizes that Reform started from the late medieval era, he sees the Protestant Reformation as the central movement since it was “a drive to make over the whole society to higher standards” (p. 63), from its conviction that “God is sanctifying us everywhere” (p. 79).

The gap between eternal requirement and ordinary life could be solved in two directions. One is to help people to reach the higher goal, and

the other is to lower the standard of expectations. Protestantism was the latter. However, to some extent, it raised the standard of expectations for lay life since its movement newly sanctified the ordinary life. As Taylor states, “Protestantism was in the line of continuity with medieval reform, attempting to raise general standards, not satisfied with a world in which only a few integrally fulfill the gospel, but trying to make certain pious practices absolutely general” (p. 82).

How the western Christendom became secularized is not merely a “subtraction story” according to Taylor, “Subtraction story” is an account that secularity is simply the subtraction of religious beliefs and superstitions. He argues that the path to a secular age was not a linear narrative of progress, rather it was a zigzag narrative with complex causes and contingencies. The first development that Taylor points out is a new interest in “nature,” – specifically, nature “for its own sake” (p. 90). Although from the point of view of secular humanism this can be perceived as a preparatory step for pure immanence and “autonomization” of nature, Taylor argues that this understanding is profoundly false. This is because Christians were the people who showed a new interest in nature for theological reasons, and this interest was not mutually exclusive with the belief in God.

Taylor then notes another development, which is the rise of

nominalism. This was the theological as well as metaphysical notion which arose to honor God's sovereignty in a radical sense. Aristotelian understanding of human nature was defined by nature or telos of human being. If God created this telos or nature, this nature seemed to actually constrain God in the sense that enabling humans to achieve their telos would require God to conform to this end. Taylor, however, points out that "this seemed to some thinkers an unacceptable attempt to limit God's sovereignty. God must always remain free to determine what is good" (p. 97), thus they conclude that the things are only what they are named. Taylor then continues, stating that "if this is right, then we, the dependent created agents, have also to relate to these things not in terms of the normative patterns they reveal, but in terms of the autonomous super-purposes of our creator. The purpose things serve are extrinsic to them. The stance is fundamentally one of instrumental reason" (p. 97). This notion becomes a different variant, however, if teleology itself eclipses. The autonomous nature is left, and empirical observation becomes the only way to understand the universe. Taylor argues that the new interest in nature would not have resulted in autonomization of nature if it was not mixed with nominalism. He further points out that something similar to autonomization of nature occurred in the realm of ethics and politics. This is "civility" (p. 99) that manages our social life and passions. Civility required discipline of both the self and the



development of the “police state” (p. 111).

This new social imaginary that Taylor calls exclusive humanism resulted from the aforementioned movements which replaced the medieval social imaginary. Our secular age with this social imaginary is far from the age of disbelief. Once more, it is important to note that it is not a religion-subtracted age, rather, it is an age of different beliefs with a different source for meaningful life. By breaking with transcendence, modernity found the source for meaning in ways that were never imagined before. This is reflected in the four eclipses according to Taylor.

First, it is an eclipse of transcendent human flourishing. Individuals and social institutions are no longer understood in terms of eternal judgment. A different notion of providence about ordering this world for mutual benefit emerged, as it is revealed in the works of Adam Smith and John Locke. Humans are now seen as basically engaging in the “exchange of services,” so the entire cosmos is seen anthropocentrically as the arena for this economy (p. 177). This new Providence diminishes God’s purposes and economizes God’s interest. As Taylor states, “God’s goals for us shrink to the single end of our encompassing this order of mutual benefit he has designed for us” (p. 221). Second is what Taylor calls “eclipse of grace.” Since God’s providence is reduced to an economic order, the universe is

discernable by reason without eternal assistance. He refers to this as “providential deism,” and this deism is open to exclusive humanism. Third, “the sense of mystery fades.” God’s providence is no longer incomprehensible, and we can understand his plans with human reason. Fourth, we refrain from any “idea that God was planning a transformation of human beings which would take them beyond the limitations which inhere in their present condition” (p. 224).

The secular age where exclusive humanism becomes a “live option” is not necessarily negative. For example, modern humanist moral psychology, which can be historically traced back to agape even though it no longer seeks its source from God or Grace, shows “great power of benevolence or altruism to humans” (p. 247). However, Taylor states that there is a “malaise” of immanence, and our secular age has always been threatened by the malaise of immanence. We are facing an explosion of options for finding significance, and Taylor names this state “nova effect.” This nova effect is an astronomical metaphor produced by cross-pressures of our history. On the one side, we are pushed by the disenchanted immanence, and on the other side, we are also pushed by the significance and the fullness of transcendence. Taylor emphasizes that his point “is not that everybody feels this, but rather, first, that many people do, and far beyond the ranks of card-carrying theists” (p. 302). He also adds that “this malaise

is specific to buffered identity, whose very invulnerability opens it to the danger that not opens it to the danger that not just evil spirits, cosmic forces or gods won't get to it, but that nothing significant will stand out for us." (p. 303). He does not say that we must go back to the past age, as he states that "it doesn't follow that the only cure for it is a return to transcendence" (p. 309). Finding solutions by searching for meaning or quasi transcendence within immanence is now viable.

Living in this cross-pressured space, most of us do not belong to the confident base of belief or unbelief. Most of us live in the cross-pressured "no-man's-land" and hesitate between the two. However, Taylor introduces an important invention from Romanticism, that is, the new role of art in our secular age creating an "open space." The pivotal shifts in post Romantic-art is the shift from mimesis to poesis, or from imitating to making. This was inevitable because the world is flattened and the reference for imitation was lost. For instance, "where formerly poetic language could rely on certain publicly available orders of meaning, it now has to consist in a language of articulated sensibility" (p.353). In other words, the "poet must articulate his own world of references" (p. 354). Taylor describes this new phenomenon as the "second disembedding" emerging with subtler language, in contrast to the "first disembedding" as a mimesis allowing contemplation. Mozart's "G minor Quintet" is profound, beautiful, and exceedingly sorrowful, and even

though there is no story or clear object of reference, we feel that “there must be an object.” This disembedded art, which Taylor calls “absolute art,” provides a way out for those who feel cross-pressure in this flattened world. As a sort of immanentized mystery, the art, or the subtler language, work as “a counterpart to the feeling that there is something inadequate in our way of life, that we live by an order which represses what is really important” (p. 358).

As concluding remarks, Taylor asks how we should inhabit in this immanent frame. In order to explain possible options, Taylor takes James William’s distinctions on modern religion (2003). In contrast to open (transcendence) and closed (immanence), there is another distinction of “spin” and “take.” “Spin” is construal life within the immanent frame that is so immersed within itself that it is impossible to see that there are other ways of construing life. “Take,” on the other hand, is a construal of life within the immanent frame that is open to appreciating other construal of life. “Take” is not something from reason, but rather than to reason, and one “must leap ahead of the reasons” (p. 550). This is being able to move beyond one’s background or “picture” in the Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian sense. Converting from closed to open “take” appeals not to syllogism and analytic truth, but rather to “sense” or feel for things.

In *A Secular Age* (2008), we can see Taylor's understanding on economy that was not so clear in "The Politics of Recognition." Taylor historicizes the current notion of "economy." He explains that "economy" is one of the most powerful modern social imaginary. To further explain this issue in detail, Taylor argues that the notion of "God's providence" has changed. In the ancient and medieval era, people believed that "God governs the world according to a benign plan" (p. 176). However, this was different from the notion that emerged in the Enlightenment. People imagined human flourishing beyond the present world, and expected final judgement beyond physical time. This viewpoint not only applied to individuals but also social institutions.

In the eighteenth century, a new way of understanding "God's providence" emerged. Accordingly, this resulted in different understandings of agents and institutions. God's benign plan was understood as a mutual benefit among people. In this era, people conceived of the "invisible hand" working as part of God's benign design, while humans engaged in an exchange of services. This meant that "economic dimension is taking on in the new notion of order" (p. 177). Economy thus became "more than a metaphor," and was "seen more and more as the dominant end of society" (p. 178). Taylor refers to this as a new major "trend." To go on further, Taylor states that the popularity of materialist Marxist account on classes was

possible due to this shift on social imaginary.

By reviewing Taylor's argument on the economy in *A Secular Age* (2008), we can further clarify his position in reference with Fraser's criticism. He approaches claims for economic equality in a grander historical point of view. In "The Politics of Recognition" (1994), he merely glances over the rise of the notion of equality in the socio-economic sphere. In *A Secular Age* (2008), however, he connects the notion with the distinction between transcendence and immanence. The emergence of the notion of the economy was related to the change in the idea of God's benevolence, and the separation from transcendence. For Taylor, the modern notion of economy is also a historical social imaginary like many others.

This indicates that in Taylor's perspective, Fraser's theory on redistribution and recognition was only possible because of the change in the social imaginary. In other words, analytically distinguishing economic and cultural recognition is only imaginable due to the rise of the economy. In the previous western history, the economic sphere was not clearly distinguished from the other spheres, and the priority of economic order over other orders was inconceivable. Most significantly, respect, or honor, was not understood in terms of material possessions.

Although this pertains to the topic I will discuss in the third chapter,

I also wish to point out that Fraser's notion of status is only probable after the advent of the idea of "unembedded" or atomic individuality. Taylor describes that there is a moral valuation under modern epistemology, which is an ethic "of independence, self-control, self-responsibility, of a disengagement which brings control" (p. 559). This moral valuation is a constructed outcome of the history of western Christendom that underwent Reform. Taylor stresses that this moral valuation is not of a subtraction story but of a creation. Again, this means secularity is not a result of simply discarding religiosity or an axiomatic outcome of history. In other words, it is not a perspective from a neutral ground, but a constructed point of view.

Taylor's argument on the disengaged moral valuation can be interpreted as a response to Fraser's criticism. Fraser precisely suggests "deconstruction" as a transformative strategy of recognition against "mainstream multiculturalism" (2003, p. 75). This is to "redress status subordination by deconstructing the symbolic oppositions that underlie currently institutionalized patterns of cultural value" (p. 75). It is to destabilize the conventional distinction of identity, such as heterosexual/homosexual, male/female, and black/white, and change "everyone's self-identity" (p. 75). Taylor does not oppose the idea of deconstructing the conventional differentiation of identity, but rather examines the fundamental moral valuation underlying her argument.

Why then is Taylor's historical approach significant? There are two critical implications which Taylor's historical analysis provides. The first one stems directly from Taylor's main concern for writing *A Secular Age*, which is the 'malaise of modernity.' The second implication is what the non-western society should take account of, which is to rethink the disengaged ideal of modernity, and go on further to reconsider Taylor's analysis on the historical development of social imaginaries.

Taylor's work may be described as what Robert Piercy calls "doing philosophy historically" (Piercy, 2009). Piercy distinguishes "doing" philosophy and studying the history of philosophy. The former is "discovering answers to contemporary philosophical questions" (p. 9), and the latter is solely "understanding the work of philosophers from the past" (p. 10). He argues, however, that there is a third way, which is "doing philosophy historically." The main objective of "doing philosophy historically" is to find the "picture." By picture, Piercy means "dispositions to approach philosophical problems in certain characteristic ways" (p. 26). A picture grows as a seed grows, and arguments of a number of philosophers can be included within a picture. For example:

Cartesians are philosophers who attach a great deal of importance to the sorts of evidence that manifest themselves within thinking



subjectivity, and who are typically reluctant to draw on other kinds. A general disposition of this sort is, I think, shared by Descartes, Malebranche, and Husserl, even though no single set of theses is. Seen in this light, philosophical pictures are much like what Arthur Danto calls “methodological directives.” They are not explanations of phenomena, but injunctions to seek explanations of a certain kind. They are not static, but dynamic. (p. 26)

Piercy states that “doing philosophy historically involves constructing narratives” (p. 42). By constructing narratives, we can ruminate our current positions which is impossible by simply philosophizing or studying the history of philosophy. He further states that “doing philosophy historically” is not relativistic because we can “determine whether some pictures are better than others” by applying “them to the history of thought and see how well they work” (p. 29). Indeed, “doing philosophy historically” possesses a different rationality and validity different from natural science or analytic philosophy. However, it does serve a different purpose which the other is unable to.

Taylor’s work is somewhat different from “doing philosophy historically,” because he is also examining the development of social imaginaries. He does analyze the philosophical development from

Augustine to Rawls (in a grander scale than what Piercy designates as “doing philosophy historically”), but he also traces how people imagine themselves and how society changed over time. However, the strength of “doing philosophy historically” is still applicable to Taylor’s project. We can get insights which cannot be perceived otherwise.

As mentioned above, Taylor’s paramount concern in *A Secular Age* (2008) is the “malaise of modernity.” Modern society lacks the object of reference to fullness, which was once connected to transcendental sources. This means those in modern society experience a sense of emptiness and meaninglessness, and at the same time, are confused while facing an explosion of options. This problematic state of modern people can only be perceived with reference to the past age, where transcendental faith was axiomatic. While Fraser’s concern is primarily on the contemporary claims stemming out from economic and cultural injustice, Taylor focuses more deeply on the underlying dilemma of modernity where exclusive humanism is a viable option. In Taylor’s view, neutrally approaching economic and cultural status will not enable us to see this problem.

While Taylor’s historical analysis in “The Politics of Recognition” is to understand the rise of the modern concept of recognition, and how procedural liberalism cannot capture the aspiration for cultural survival, in *A*

*Secular Age* (2008) Taylor delves into more fundamental conditions of modernity. As we have seen, Taylor's constructed narrative on the process of secularization can be interpreted as a criticism against Fraser's method for theorizing and against the notion of "status."

There are, however, further implications we can draw from Taylor's work. This implication is more applicable for the non-western society which is significantly modernized. Furthermore, it enables us to conceive of our current state historically. There are both political and philosophical aspects for this. By political aspect, I mean to reconsider the liberal democratic state (in relation to recognition) as the historically constructed social imaginary implanted by the West. By philosophical aspect, I mean to critically approach the "objectified" and "neutralized" framework for recognition.

In order to make this point, it is helpful to review the debate between Peter Gordon (2008) and Guido Vanheeswijck (2015), the reason being that they contextualize Taylor's argument. Gordon criticizes Taylor for employing the distinction of transcendence and immanence to analyze the history of secularization. According to Gordon, Taylor uses this distinction as if transcendence and immanence are transcendental notions, despite the fact that they are merely historical notions which emerged in the

Axial Age<sup>2</sup> (p. 658-659). Gordon undermines Taylor's narrative of secularization by historicizing the pivotal concept that Taylor uses trans-historically.

In response to Gordon's criticism, Vanheeswijck argues that Taylor does not employ the notion of transcendence and immanence. A close reading of *A Secular Age* (2008) reveals that Taylor understands transcendence and immanence are historical distinctions which emerged in the process of modernization. He further argues that Taylor is aware of the fact that the distinction between transcendence and immanence is only applicable to the western history, specifically the secularization of the Christendom. Accordingly, Taylor is indeed relying on the invention of the Axial Age.

We have seen that Taylor's historical analysis on recognition and modernity can be presented as a response to Fraser's method of theorizing and the conception of "status." Taylor's historical narrative in "The Politics of Recognition" (1996) and *A Secular Age* (2008) reveals that the understanding of recognition in the Fraserian way cannot capture the

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<sup>2</sup> His other important criticism against Taylor is the ontological status of social imaginary and the object of transcendental reference or God, however, I will not discuss on this matter here. For Axial Age, see Jaspers (1948)

“malaise of modernity” nor the aspiration for cultural survival. However, the debate between Gordon and Vanheeswijck reveals another aspect of Taylor’s narrative. Taylor’s portrayal of the modern social imaginary and his usage of transcendence and immanence as a framework cannot be directly applied to the non-western society in terms of its analysis. This implies that a satisfactory understanding of recognition in non-western societies should be based on independent studies of the history of the given societies. This, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

## **Chapter III. Identity and Recognition**

### **Status and Presumption**

In this chapter, we will compare Fraser’s notion of status and Taylor’s corresponding notion, presumption. Integrating redistribution and recognition, or accepting perspectival dualism, does not necessarily result in status theory. Therefore, the status model of recognition requires a separate attention from perspectival dualism. In this chapter, I will argue that Taylor’s recognition contains valuable aspects which are not captured in Fraser’s recognition.

We will compare Taylor’s “presumption” and Fraser’s

corresponding notion, “status.” Taylor emphasizes the difficulty of recognizing other cultures due to the difference of horizons. He argues that we should “presume” the good of the other culture prior to the study of that culture, since there is no neutral ground to understand other cultures. Fraser, however, argues that guaranteeing equal “status” to an individual is sufficient, and that recognizing the other in terms of identity risks the danger of “reification.” We will also review *Sources of the Self* (1989) in order to see why “presumption” is crucial in Taylor’s perspective. Taylor understands identity as a narrative, and this assumes a certain degree of incommensurability. This means that the confrontation of difference in modern society may not be adequately addressed by the framework of “status,” since there are conflicts of difference which are not limited to “status.”

Having argued that protecting cultural immunities is crucial in his essay, Taylor further explains why this is so. He does not argue that every culture is of equal worth. Rather, he states that the worth of culture should be determined after the actual study of the culture. In doing so, the deciding criteria for the judgement becomes tricky. Taylor opposes setting a universal criterion for the study. On the other hand, he argues that the worth of the

culture must be judged by the criteria within the culture, or within the 'horizon' of the culture. By studying other cultures, then, one learns to move into a broader horizon, leaving what is formerly taken for granted.

Taylor, however, does not contest that one must study the other culture prior to recognizing it. Instead, a 'presumption' of the worth of the culture is necessary; namely, that the 'presumption' that every culture has its value. This may be presumed on a religious ground as Herder believes in divine providence, whereby every culture is not merely the result of an accident but meant for greater harmony. It may also be presumed on a human level, where one may reasonably assume that cultures which are formed by numerous people over a long period time almost certainly contain something worthy to be admired and respected.

Fraser, on the other hand, proposes a new way of understanding recognition, contesting the relation between recognition and redistribution. She argues that for Taylor and Honneth, recognition is a matter of self-realization, whereas for her it is a matter of justice. Fraser develops what she refers to as the 'status model of recognition.' This model suggests conceiving of recognition outside of personal identity formation, and "from the external perspective of an objective, social-scientific observer" (Zurn, 2003, p. 519). Fraser argues that "one should say that it is unjust that some

individuals and groups are denied the status of full partners in social interaction simply as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of cultural value” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 29), or in other words, ensure the ‘parity of participation’ of each individual or group.

Fraser argues that there are at least four advantages of this status model over the self-realization model. Firstly, this model permits morally binding claims for recognition under a plural modern society. Secondly, the model eschews psychologization. Unlike self-realization, the status model “decouples the normativity of recognition claims from psychology” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 31). Thirdly, it avoids ensuring equal rights to social esteem for everyone. What the model entails is the equal right to pursue social esteem under a fair condition of equal opportunity. Lastly, the status model of recognition can successfully be integrated with redistribution since it regards recognition as a problem of justice.

According to Fraser, there are two political tendencies which may threaten the effort to integrate redistribution and recognition.<sup>3</sup> The first is the problem of reification. Fraser argues that the struggle for recognition tends to encourage separatism and group enclaves, chauvinism and

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<sup>3</sup> Fraser (2003) actually claims that there are three threatening political tendencies. However, the last tendency, the problem of misframing, is omitted since it is not directly related to the topic of this paper (p. 91).



intolerance, and patriarchy and authoritarianism. The second is the problem of displacement. Status conflicts tend to marginalize, eclipse, and displace redistribution struggles rather than enrich them. Fraser argues that these threats cannot be resolved through the self-realization model, yet can be defused by the status model.

‘Avoiding psychologization’ is the point by which Zurn (2003) criticizes Fraser. He defends the positions of Taylor and Honneth against that of Fraser, arguing that while the theory of recognition politics and the theory of redistributive politics can be combined, she is wrong in the claim that the status model of recognition is necessary for a critical theory of social justice. Zurn (2003) argues that the strength of Fraser’s status model is that it “takes up a viewpoint external to identity development and so can assess recognition harms independently of subjects’ beliefs and desires” (p. 533), which the identity based-model of Taylor and Honneth takes into account. In Zurn’s view, the advantage that Fraser claims is merely a result of the “basic method of avoidance” (p. 533). He further argues that the identity based-model is also capable of dealing with the problem of redistribution and solving the problem of reification, especially through Honneth’s more nuanced model of recognition.

Going beyond the discussion of psychologization, I contend that

Taylor's model consists of an important aspect, the fusion of horizon, which is not fully captured in Honneth's model either. When analyzing the new social movement, Honneth (2003) states that there is a possibility that the claim for recognition "no longer seems to have the merely indirect sense of ensuring a community's continued existence by either non-interference in or promotion of its cultural practices, but rather the entirely direct sense of acceptance of – or indeed esteem for – its objectives or value orientations as such" (p. 165). This objective "can include the demand that, as a member of a cultural minority, one not only enjoy equal political rights, but also the real opportunity to gain public attention for one's group-specific value convictions" (p. 166). He then argues it is unclear whether such a demand will require the fourth principle of recognition – in addition to love, law, and achievement. Instead, Taylor contends that these are "speculative reflections" (p. 169) and "the overwhelming majority of demands now being made by means of this rhetorical formula do not really transcend the normative horizon of the dominant recognition order" (p. 169).

What Honneth refers to as 'speculative reflections,' however, are precisely what concerns Taylor. Taylor (1994) takes the minority's demand for the recognition of group-specific value seriously and argues that "the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture" (p. 43). He further

argues that suppressing the demand is not only inhumane (because it suppresses identities), but is also highly discriminatory. Here we can perceive that Taylor's recognition is much more sensitive to difference and cultural survival in comparison to Fraser's recognition (which states that guaranteeing equal status is sufficient) and Honneth's recognition (which does not consider the demand for recognition of group-specific value).

Once we accept the fact that there are important aspects of Taylor's recognition which cannot be captured within that of Fraser and Honneth, Taylor's other concepts, such as fundamental liberties, privileges and immunities, presumption, and fusion of horizon, recapture our attention. Since Taylor does not repudiate the politics of equal dignity, these concepts work as a bridge to connect the politics of equal dignity and the politics of difference. The separation of fundamental liberties and privileges helps balance universal right and cultural survival. On the other hand, the fusion of horizon opens the possibility for understanding other cultures, in the sense that we judge different cultures within the horizon of the each. The presumption of cultural value functions as a critical buffer in doing so, because it ensures respect in prior to judging the different culture, and it does not obligate us to study every culture, which will be impossible when we confront an alien culture.

“Presumption” becomes more important if we further look into how Taylor understand identity. “The Politics of Recognition” (1994) is relatively short, therefore, it does not sufficiently reveals how Taylor perceive identity. In order to grasp the whole picture of how Taylor sees identity we must look into *The Sources of The Self* (1989). In the following section, we will review how Taylor depicts identity, and clarify why “status” falls short to recognize identity.

### **Narrativity of Identity**

The purpose of Taylor’s book, *Sources of the Self* (1989), is to study the history of modern (western) identity. Taylor traces back western history in order to explicate how modern identity was formed. He focuses on the three important aspects of modern identity; inwardness, affirmation of ordinary life, and the expressivist notion of nature as an inner moral source. Taylor explores philosophers from Augustine, Descartes, to Montaigne, then studies religious reformation to enlightenment, and finally analyzes literary works of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to clarify the sources of modern self.

From Taylor’s work, we can summarize four main features of modern morality. First, one important component of the modern sense of morality is the avoidance of suffering. In negative terms, this means that

“we no longer see human beings as playing a role in a larger cosmic order or divine history” (13), and therefore violent punishment in the previous era does not pertain meaning any longer. On the other hand, in a positive aspect, it means that we seriously consider the welfare of others. Secondly, we believe right is universal by itself. Universal right is not completely a new notion, since the earlier conception of it was natural law. However, the significant difference is that in the past age, people were fundamentally under the law whereas modern right is derived from autonomy. “This includes the notion of ourselves as disengaged subjects, breaking free from a comfortable but illusory sense of immersion in nature, and objectifying the world around us” (p. 12). Thirdly, ordinary life has replaced other-worldly piety. Fourthly, we no longer consider ourselves as the sources and the creators of what is meaningful.

Rather than comprehensively reviewing *Sources of the self* (1989), here we will examine part one of the book. This will be sufficient for the purpose of this particular chapter, for Taylor makes an argument on identity itself, prior to tracing the history of western identity. The most important premise of Taylor’s argument on identity is that identity and the good, or selfhood and morality, are “inextricably intertwined” (p. 3). He opposes much of the contemporary moral philosophy in that they narrowly focus on morality. According to Taylor, moral reaction has two facets; the first being

that it is rooted in our instinct, and second being that it is also an affirmation of a given ontology. Taylor criticizes modern naturalists in that they attempt to completely ignore the second side of morality and reduce morality into something no less than a gut reaction. Here, moral ontology indicates an unarticulated background of our moral instincts and spirituality. In fact, articulating this is not an easy task since “ontology behind any person’s viewpoint can remain largely implicit” (p. 9).

In order to explain moral ontology, Taylor introduces the notion of strong evaluation. Strong evaluation is “discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower, which are not rendered valid by our own desire, inclinations, or choices, but rather stand independent of these and offer standard by which they can be judged” (p. 4). Weak evaluation, on the other hand, is a standard which can judge right or wrong by desire and inclination, and even this weak evaluation is the object of strong evaluation.

Taylor states that there are three axes of moral thinking. The first is “our sense of respect for obligations to other”; the second is “our understanding of what makes a full life; and the third is “the characteristics by which we think of ourselves as commanding the (attitudinal) respect of those around us” (15). These three axes are the framework Taylor uses to articulate moral instincts. He argues that even though the content may be different, the three axes can be found in every culture as “inescapable

frameworks” to support moral instincts and the decisions of the people within a culture. In the modern world, however, this framework itself becomes problematic. Traditional frameworks from the past are downgraded, discredited, and regarded as personal predilection. Furthermore, no religion or horizon encompasses the society as a whole. This is similar to what Weber called ‘disenchantment,’ or “the dissipation of our sense of the cosmos as a meaningful order, [which] has allegedly destroyed the horizons in which people previously lived their spiritual lives” (p. 17).

This framework incorporates a crucial set called qualitative distinctions, which is “the sense that some action, or mode of life, or mode of feeling is incomparably higher than the others which are more readily available to us” (19). For instance, Plato considered good life as the mastery of self with reason dominating desires, while for Christians, higher life is achieved through transformation of the will. These qualitative distinctions from the two sources of western civilization, namely Greek and Christian traditions, are denied in that of the modern. Reason is no longer perceived in terms of cosmic or personal order, and charity has lost its connection to the love of God. Instead, vision and expressive power emerged as one of the qualitative distinctions, with the belief that the “artist sees farther” (p. 22).

What concerns Taylor here is not the fact that change occurs with what qualitative distinctions signify. Rather, it is altogether denied with the

axis of moral thinking. Naturalists, as mentioned before, are tempted to deny the framework itself, and classical utilitarianism precisely rejects the qualitative distinctions between different human ends. Taylor believes that they are deeply confused because their attempt resulted from what he refers to as the “affirmation of ordinary life” rooted in Reform Theologies. However, the affirmation of ordinary life does not denounce qualitative distinctions. This notion indicates that “there is certain dignity and worth in this life requires a contrast; no longer, indeed, between this life and some higher activity like contemplation, war, active citizenship, or heroic asceticism, but now lying between different ways of living the life of production and reproduction. The notion is never that “whatever we do is acceptable” (p. 23). There is a tension between the affirmation of ordinary life and qualitative distinctions. However, he argues that it is a kind of confusion that denies the distinctions altogether. Whereas in the past people enjoyed the same ontological solidity as a structure of the universe, modern disenchantment undermined this traditional framework. Taylor states that “living within such strongly qualified horizons is constitutive of human agency” and stepping outside from these limits means stepping outside “what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood” (p. 27).

Now, identity is deeply related to this relation between frameworks



and human agency. Taylor argues that identity is closely similar to a sense of orientation. It is “to know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what not, what has meaning and importance for you and trivial and secondary” (28). Taylor argues that spatial orientation is rooted deeply in the human psyche, such as those undergoing an identity crisis who show a loss of the sense of orientation in physical space. Identity gives a response to the question, “Who are we?” and to answer this question by orientation presupposes “a space analogue,” or takes the spatial frameworks as ontologically basic. Identity is therefore determined by how such a moral space of questions is mapped by strong evaluations and qualitative distinctions. Taylor adds that framework is not simply a phenomenological account of identity, but it is instead “an account of its transcendental conditions” (p. 32).

Understanding the self in terms of identity is equivalent to a scientific study of objects. The object of scientific study must be “absolutely” taken by its meaning in and of itself, independent of any interpretations or descriptions, captured in explicit description, and described without external surrounding references. In contrast, identity is essentially defined by what is significant to me, oriented toward what is good, never fully explicit, and impossible to be described without reference. Taylor argues that a self exists

only within the “web of interlocation,” and “the full definition of someone’s identity thus usually involves not only his stand on moral and spiritual matters but also some reference to a defining community” (p. 36). Taylor stresses that identity is dependent to language, specifically the language of the community where in which the agent belongs, because our thoughts are fundamentally dependent on language and interlocation. While it cannot be denied that human beings can be original and move beyond the vision of contemporary, this is only a secondary matter. The modern understanding of identity – a highly independent individualism – is derived from the confusion that human agents can step outside this web of interlocation.

Taylor then argues that there are two ways we may fail to define our spiritual orientation, or identity. Orientation has two aspects – the framework itself and one’s place within the framework. For example, one may be lost because he or she is ignorant of the surrounding environment. In this case, one’s ignorance may be resolved by an informative map. In the other case, one may become lost because he or she does not know how to locate oneself on the map. In other words, my value as a person may be defined by how “I am ‘placed’ or ‘situated’ in relation to the good, or whether or not I am in ‘contact’ with it” (p. 42). The premodern aspiration to fullness was defined by connecting one’s life with some greater reality and narrative, whereas modern aspirations can be met by building

something into one's life, some pattern of higher action, or some meaning. The modern aspiration has obvious affinities with that of the past, and the premodern aspiration has not disappeared even for modern unbelievers. Taylor states that an example of persisting premodern aspiration is that people place meaning for witnessing important events. In any case, this aspiration for the closer contact or position to the good is not a matter of answering a question with a 'yes' or a 'no.' The yes-or-no question merely gives answers regarding the direction but not how far we are from the good.

Accordingly, we grasp our identity in terms of narratives. We live in this space of questions, which can only be answered coherently by narratives. We are always changing and forming our identities in the sense that our position changes with reference to the good, and "in order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have becoming, and of where we are going" (p. 47). Just as we cannot escape the framework of orientation to the good, we also cannot disregard this narrativity. This means that defining our identity is also a quest. We must examine our lives in order to assess our identity, and evaluate how it fits into our surroundings. The kind of self-understanding which Taylor strongly opposes is the punctual and neutral self-defined in abstraction from the space of questions and the narrative feature of identity.

Taylor claims that the good within the framework is qualitatively

differentiated. Through this distinction, we can perceive the highest good or the hypergood which is incomparably above all the other goods and dominates over all. This good is qualitatively discontinuous from other goods and takes a pivotal role for one's identity, since one's direction in relation to this good has a crucial importance. One may drown inside a sense of worthlessness if he or she is rejected or turned away from the hypergood. On the contrary, the conviction that one's life is turned toward the hypergood gives him or her a sense of wholeness and fullness of being.

While the hypergood is the only highest good within a community, it is possible to have different hypergoods in different communities. Furthermore, the hypergood may change within a community or civilization. For instance, equal respect regardless of race, class, gender, culture, and religion is the ultimate good of the contemporary western culture. However, the ideal of equal respect is not the perennial hypergood of civilization. Instead, it was born through the history of conflict. Hypergood is a potential source of conflict, since it is exclusive of lower goods and other hypergoods by its very nature.

If hypergood is exclusive yet changeable, how should we then evaluate the change of the hypergood and rationally justify the transition? Taylor's response is that we do so through practical reasoning. It must be noted, however, that practical reasoning is not to conclude one is absolutely

correct. There is a feature of incommensurability between the two hypergoods or the arrangements of the two cultures. Neither is there a middle ground to determine which is correct. Rather, the aim of practical reasoning is to establish that “some position is superior to some other” (p. 72). It is something we do when we show, for instance, that we get from A to B by resolving confusion or contradiction. This argument is based on the nature of transition from A to B, and the rational proof is to show that the transition is an error-reducing one. In addition, the argument is evaluated based on other possible rival transitions. This sort of argument has its source in the “biographical narrative,” which according to Taylor means “we are convinced that a certain view is superior because we have lived a transition which we understand as error-reducing and hence as epistemic gain” (p. 72). Taylor’s point here is that the transition from one hypergood to the other cannot do away with controversies and that it cannot convince everyone for its absolute validity.

Taylor then compares his position, which presumes the hypergood, with that of other thinkers. He refers to his argument as a substantive conception of ethics, while that of modern moral philosophers – such as Rawls, Hare, Habermas, Bernard Williams – a procedural conception of ethics. The main difference between the two views is the standard of evaluation on rationality. Substantive reasoning is to judge “the rationality

of agents or their thoughts and feelings in substantive terms,” and “the criterion for rationality is that one gets it right” (p. 85). In contrast, procedural reasoning is to judge the rationality of agent by how one thinks, not by whether the outcome is substantively correct. As Taylor states, “Good thinking is defined procedurally” (p. 86).

As we can see, Taylor’s depiction of identity possess two features that are potentially exclusive of Fraser’s account on recognition. The first is the ontology which the identity of agents are embedded in, and the second is the narrative nature of identity. Individuals perceive their identity with a framework – or a strong evaluation – and qualitative distinctions. The way in which individuals discriminate the order of the good is embedded within the given ontology, or the values of the community they are in. Identity is inherently a narrative, because it involves the history or the story of one’s relative position to the given good.

These two features of identity raise the question of whether the two different identities or the good of different cultures are incommensurable. Taylor states that:

Human societies differ greatly in their culture and values. They represent different ways of being human, we might say. But perhaps there is no way, in the end, of arbitrating between them

when they clash. Perhaps they are quite incommensurable, and just as we recognize in general that the existence of certain goods is dependent on the existence of humans, so we might be forced to recognize that certain goods are only such granted the existence of humans within a certain cultural form. Unlike the other attempts to relativize the good that I discussed above, I think this is a real possibility. There may be different kinds of human realization which are really incommensurable. (p. 60, 61)

Taylor continues that he “doubt[s] if it is true” (p. 61), and says that “it may be that our contact with certain cultures will force us to recognize incommensurability, as against simply a balance of goods- and bads-for-everyone that we cannot definitively weigh up. But we certainly shouldn't assume this is so a priori” (p. 62). Taylor, however, does not continue to elaborate on this topic.

Taylor's discussion on incommensurability can be compared to Alasdair MacIntyre's argument on the topic. In a number of his writings, Taylor expresses respect for MacIntyre's argument on narrativity, and acknowledges his influence.<sup>4</sup> MacIntyre discusses that individual interpretation (1977) and traditions of western civilization (1988) are

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<sup>4</sup> For example, see “History, Critique, Social Change and Democracy: An Interview with Charles Taylor” (2014)

narratives with different logics. In fact, he argues that the only way human beings attain knowledge is through narratives. His central statement is that the logics of different narratives are incommensurable.

The point I wish to make here is that Taylor is conscious of the narrative nature of identity, and does not take commensurability for granted. Although he does not strongly deny the possibility of understanding the narrative of other cultures as MacIntyre does, he still points out the real difficulty of confronting other cultures. This is why he introduces the notion of “presumption” as a buffering concept for coexistence of different cultures within liberal democratic states.

By all means, this does not mean that Fraser’s model of recognition belittles this fundamental difference arising from the narrative which assumes a different good in each culture. She is merely “avoiding psychologization” and focuses only on whether equal status is granted to citizens of different identities. She has her own good reason for doing so, which she refers to as “reification.” Reification is “to encourage separatism and group enclaves, chauvinism and intolerance, patriarchalism and authoritarianism” (2003, p. 92). She believes approaching recognition in Taylor’s way can result in further oppression for individuals.

Even if we admit that Fraser’s concern on reification is valid, there



are still conflicts arising from difference which cannot be resolved by the framework of “status.” Struggles between religious denominations is an apposite example that demonstrates the necessity of the Taylorian model. Let us assume that two denominations within the same religion and state enjoy the same right within the given polity. There are no major unequal economic distributions or unjust cultural patterns which misrecognize one or the other group. However, the creed of the two denominations conflict with each other. In this case, even if the economic and cultural status are guaranteed, the conflict will remain far from being resolved. Unnecessary social as well as material resources are mobilized for the rivalry, and more importantly, the status itself may be disintegrated if the conflict continues. In this case, guaranteeing the apparent status will be insufficient, for it is the actual difference of content which matters. This type of extreme difference is not limited to religious groups. Political parties, ethnic/cultural groups, or any other groups with a distinct identity may share the same problem. Indeed, Taylor’s model of recognition cannot provide a direct answer to all these conflicts. Nonetheless, his model is a stronger framework than that of Fraser’s, in that it is a sensitive difference beyond status.

## **Chapter IV. Conclusion**

This thesis has examined Fraser's criticism against Taylor's model of recognition, and reconstructed Taylor's response to Fraser's criticism based on his other works, *Sources of the Self* (1989) and *A Secular Age* (2008). This analysis is relevant to contemporary Korean society due to

already existing as well as rising claims for recognition. Taylor's main claim is that recognition is "a vital human need" for identity formation. He assumes a dialogical nature of identity, and stresses the existence of horizon in the background of individual identities. On the other hand, Fraser argues that approaching recognition in terms of identity is misleading, and the objective for addressing the problem of recognition must be to achieve equal status of individuals. Fraser criticizes that the Taylorian model of recognition displaces the "politics of redistribution" and risks the danger of reification.

Chapter II examined how Taylor and Fraser theorize the concept of recognition differently. Taylor constructs a historical narrative to explain the rise of the modern notions of equality and difference, and demonstrates how the two values should be pursued. On the other hand, Fraser theorizes recognition from contemporary politics, or "folk-paradigm," and stresses that redistribution and recognition must be analytically distinguished. We saw that the difference between Taylor and Fraser regarding the relations between recognition and redistribution rises from the way in which the two thinkers theorize. For Taylor, the modern notion of economy is a historical social imaginary. Furthermore, we have reviewed Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2008) in order to further examine the different ways in which Fraser and Taylor each construct their theory. By reviewing *A Secular Age*, we were

able to draw out two implications. Firstly, Taylor's account on disengaged moral valuation can be interpreted as a response to Fraser's criticism, for Taylor questions the fundamental moral valuation beneath Fraser's argument. Secondly, even Taylor's method of analyzing history cannot be applied one-dimensionally to non-western societies.

In Chapter III, we compared Taylor's "presumption" and Fraser's corresponding notion, "status." Taylor emphasizes the difficulty of recognizing other cultures due to the difference of horizons. He argues that we should "presume" the good of the other culture prior to the study of that culture, since there is no neutral ground to understand other cultures. Fraser, however, argues that guaranteeing equal "status" to an individual is sufficient, and that recognizing the other in terms of identity risks the danger of "reification." We have also reviewed *Sources of the Self* (1989) in order to see why "presumption" is crucial in Taylor's perspective. We concluded that Taylor understands identity as a narrative, and this assumes a certain degree of incommensurability. This means that the confrontation of difference in modern society may not be adequately addressed by the framework of "status," since there are conflicts of difference which is not limited to "status."

We have distinguished Fraser's argument on recognition in two

parts. The first is the dualistic approach – economic and cultural recognition – and the second is the status model of recognition. As aforementioned, the two parts are not dependent on each other. The first part of Fraser’s argument is compatible with Taylor’s theory of recognition, and Fraser’s consideration on economic injustice is able to complement Taylor’s model of recognition. In the process of being politicized, Taylor’s model of recognition of stressing identity formation may cause unintended consequences, and Fraser’s sensitivity to economic inequalities is helpful in minimizing unjust consequences.

However, the second part of Fraser’s theory, “status,” is less compatible to Taylor’s argument. In fact, the two scholar’s positions are conflicting on this matter. By arguing for “status,” Fraser attempts to understand difference on neutral grounds. Meanwhile, we have seen Taylor’s continued opposition against this kind of attempt throughout his writings. In “the Politics of Recognition” (1994), he directly states that there is no neutral ground to compare cultures. In *A Secular Age* (2008), he argues that disengaged moral valuation is a constructed outcome of the history of western Christendom that underwent the Reform. In *Sources of the Self* (1989), he explains identity as a relative position to the goods of each culture, and also states that the commensurability of those goods are not guaranteed.

Taylor's opposition against the attempt to address difference on neutral grounds is supported by his strong argument on horizon. He states that social ontologies working as a background for individual identities actually do exist, and he alerts warns against the modern tendency to belittle the difference rising from separate horizons as well as its tendency to take the disengaged ideal for granted while it is itself a created social imaginary. Therefore, even if Fraser's concerns on economic inequalities and the problem of reification are timely, Taylor's argument on the politics of recognition remains largely intact, unless his understanding of identity and narrative on modern identity/social imaginary is refuted.

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국문 초록

## 인정의 정치:

### 테일러의 인정의 지평을 중심으로

서울대학교 대학원

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본 논문의 목적은 찰스 테일러의 인정 모델에 대한 내시 프레이저의 비판을 검토하고 자아의 원천들과 (1989) 세속의 시대들 (2008) 중심으로 프레이저의 비판에 대해 테일러의 입장을 재구성하는 것이다. 본 연구는 한국사회에 이미 존재하고 지속적으로 증가하고 있는 인정의 요구와 관련을 갖는다. 테일러의 주장의 핵심은 인정은 정체성 형성을 위한 “절대적 필요” 라는 것이다. 테일러는 정체성의 대화적 본성을 가정하고 개인의 정체성의 배경으로서의 지평의 존재를 강조한다. 반면, 프레이저는 인정을 정체성의 차원에서 접근하는 것은 바람직하지 않고, 인정의 문제를 접근하는데 있어 동등한 지위를 추구하는 것을 그 목표로 해야 한다고 주장한다. 프레이저는 테일러의 인정 모델이 “재분배의 정치” 를 소개해왔고, 물화의 위험이 있다고 비판한다.

제2장은 테일러와 프레이저가 각각 인정의 개념을 어떻게 이론화 하는지를 검토한다. 테일러는 현대적 개념으로서의 평등과 차이가 어떻게 발생했는지에 대한 역사적 서사를 구성하고, 이 두 개념이 동시에 어떻게 추구될 수 있는지를 보여준다. 반면, 프레이저는 현실정치, 혹은 “대중적 패러다임” 에서 출발하여 인정을 이론화 하고, 재분배와 인정은 분석적으로 구분되어야 한다고 주장한다. 인정과 재분배에

대한 테일러와 프레이저의 상이한 이해는 두 학자의 다른 이론화의 방식에 기인한다. 테일러에게 현대적 개념으로써의 경제는 역사성을 띠는 사회적 상상이다. 더 나아가, 제2장은 테일러의 세속의 시대 (2008) 검토를 통해 테일러와 프레이저의 이론화의 차이를 보다 심도 있게 비교하고, 이를 통해 두 가지 함의를 도출한다. 첫째는 테일러의 분리된 도덕적 평가에 대한 설명은 프레이저의 비판에 대한 대응으로 이해될 수 있다는 점이다. 테일러는 프레이저의 주장의 근본적인 도덕적 평가에 의문을 제시하기 때문이다. 둘째는 테일러식의 역사적 분석 역시 비서구 사회에 일차원적으로 적용될 수 없다는 것이다.

제3장은 테일러의 “추정” 개념과 이에 상응하는 프레이저의 “지위” 개념을 검토한다. 테일러는 지평의 차이로 인해 다른 문화를 인정하는 것이 어렵다는 점을 강조한다. 테일러는 타 문화를 연구하기 이전에 해당 문화의 선을 “추정” 하는 것이 필요하다고 주장한다. 다른 문화를 이해하기 위한 중립적 기준이 없기 때문이다. 반면, 프레이저는 동등한 지위를 인정하는 것으로 충분하고, 정체성의 차원에서 타인을 인정하는 것은 “문화” 의 위험이 존재한다고 주장한다. 이 장은 자아의 원천들을 (1989) 추가적으로 검토하여 “추정” 이 왜 테일러의 관점에서 중요한지를 살펴본다. 제3장은 테일러가 정체성을 서사로 이해하고, 이는 일정 정도의 통약가능성을 전제하고 있다고 결론을 내린다. 이는 현대 사회에서의 차이는 “지위” 의 틀로 충분히 다룰 수 없다는 것을 의미한다. 차이에서 발생하는 갈등이 “지위” 의 범위를 벗어나는 경우가 있기 때문이다.

본 논문은 테일러의 주장의 주요한 부분이 프레이저의 비판에 의해 반박되지 않았다고 결론을 내린다. 차이를 중립적 기준에서 다루려는 시도에 대해 테일러는 지평에 대한 강한 주장을 통해 비판한다. 테일러는 개인의 정체성의 배경으로써의 사회적 존재론이 존재한다고 주장한다. 더 나아가, 테일러는 상이한 지평에서 발생하는 차이를 과소평가하고 분리된 이상을 무비판적으로 수용하는 현대적 경향을 비판한다. 따라서, 프레이저의 경제적 불평등과 문화의 대한 우려가 시의 적절하다고 할지라도, 테일러의 정체성에 대한 이해와 현대 정체성과 사회적 상상들에 대한 서사가 비판되지 않는다면 테일러의 인정의 정치에 대한 주요한 주장은 반박되지 않는다.

**주요어:** 찰스 테일러, 인정의 정치, 지평, 정체성, 난시 프레이저, 악셀 호네틀

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